

Signature



FEATURING BILL O'CONNELL



*Bluemoon Recordings presents,
Signature, a forum for showcasing
new or underexposed jazz talent.
Pianist/composer Bill O'Connell
is the first featured artist on this
collection of outstanding jazz.*



BLUEMOON

© 1993 Bluemoon Recordings, a Division of MCA/Bluemoon
Recordings, Ltd. Distributed in the USA by Rhino Records, Inc., in Canada
by BMG Music Canada, Inc. All rights reserved. (79176)

1. Main Street (Bill O'Connell) 4:53

GROVER WASHINGTON, JR. – soprano saxophone
BILL O'CONNELL – piano, keyboards
CHARLES FAMBROUGH – bass
PABLO BATISTA – congas, percussion
RICKY SEBASTIAN – drums

2. Tell Me Again (Bill O'Connell) 4:30

BILL O'CONNELL – piano, keyboards
CHARLES FAMBROUGH – acoustic bass
PABLO BATISTA – bongos
RICKY SEBASTIAN – drums

3. Nina (Charles Fambrough) 3:59

BILL O'CONNELL – piano, keyboards
CHARLES FAMBROUGH – acoustic bass
PABLO BATISTA – bongos, percussion
RICKY SEBASTIAN – drums
HOWARD ALSTON – soprano saxophone

4. St. Croix (Bill O'Connell) 5:34

BILL O'CONNELL – piano, keyboards
CHARLES FAMBROUGH – acoustic bass
PABLO BATISTA – congas, percussion
RICKY SEBASTIAN – drums

5. Alfalfa Sez (Bill O'Connell) 4:02

BILL O'CONNELL – piano
CHARLES FAMBROUGH – acoustic bass
RICKY SEBASTIAN – drums

6. Angels at Play (Charles Fambrough) 5:33

GROVER WASHINGTON, JR. – soprano saxophone
BILL O'CONNELL – piano, keyboards
CHARLES FAMBROUGH – acoustic bass
PABLO BATISTA – congas, percussion
RICKY SEBASTIAN – drums

7. Jazz Eyes (Howard Alston) 3:40

BILL O'CONNELL – piano
CHARLES FAMBROUGH – acoustic bass
RICKY SEBASTIAN – drums
HOWARD ALSTON – soprano saxophone

8. Hit or Miss (Bill O'Connell) 4:41

BILL O'CONNELL – piano
CHARLES FAMBROUGH – acoustic bass
RICKY SEBASTIAN – drums

9. Cyclone (Bill O'Connell) 4:54

BILL O'CONNELL – piano, keyboards
PABLO BATISTA – congas, percussion
RICKY SEBASTIAN – drums

10. Sammy's Song (Bill O'Connell) 5:52

BILL O'CONNELL – piano
HOWARD ALSTON – soprano saxophone

COMPACT
DISC
DIGITAL AUDIO

A A D



The origins of this project can be traced back to when pianist Bill O'Connell and bassist Charles Fambrough first played together. "We met when we subbed with Jerry Gonzalez's group, Fort Apache, two years ago" remembers Fambrough. "I enjoyed Bill's advanced harmonic sense and his approach to playing chords. Since that time we have worked together a lot, going on tour with my band and recording *The Charmer* for CTI. After listening to Bill's own music, I was surprised when I realized that he wasn't signed to a label. The first opportunity I had, I spoke on his behalf to Bluemoon." The result is *Signature*, a forum for Bill O'Connell's talents and original music.

"This record came about due to my association with Charles" says Bill O'Connell. "I've worked with Dave Valentin for around ten years, was with Astrud Gilberto for two and in my early days went on the road with Mongo Santamaria. While in straight-ahead jazz, I've spent periods with Chet Baker and Sonny Rollins among many others. So this record has given me the opportunity to take all of my influences and put them together in my own music." In a jazz world artificially divided by marketing experts into two categories (mainstream and contemporary), Bill O'Connell throughout *Signature* constantly crosses these boundaries to create sounds that can only be classified as good music.

As a youth, Bill O'Connell was classically trained, attending the Oberlin Conservatory as a composer. "But the thing I missed was the drums" he remembers. "Jazz encompassed everything that interested me. I wanted to play and compose music that was sophisticated but also swung; that to me is jazz, the possibility of going anywhere." Since first touring with Mongo Santamaria (an association that lasted two years), O'Connell has been steadily employed playing creative music. In speaking about his longtime employer Dave Valentin, O'Connell could just as well be talking about himself: "I always liked his openness and his ability to have his music be a little bit undefinable, not fitting into any one easy category."

Other than an album back in 1978 for the long defunct Inner City label (*Searching*) and an obscure session for a Japanese company, *Signature* is Bill O'Connell's first opportunity to feature his own music on record. He took great care in picking out the perfect sidemen to interpret his originals. "Charles Fambrough's playing is as solid as a rock and he's not only a great bassist but a very talented writer. I'd worked with drummer Ricky Sebastian in the late Emily Remler's band. Ricky is very versatile, as is everyone on this record. Charles recommended Pablo Batista as my percussionist. I like the fact that Pablo has all of the

Afro-Cuban roots but, when it comes to playing toys and adding colors, he's also very talented. This is the first time I actually played with Grover Washington Jr, who is on two songs. Everyone knows Grover; he's one of the greats. And Howard Alston does a very good job of playing some of the melodies on the record. His interpretation of 'Sammy's Song' is special."

Seven of the ten songs on *Signature* were composed by Bill O'Connell while the remainder were contributed by Charles Fambrough and Howard Alston. "The diversity of the album keeps it interesting to me" says O'Connell. "I did not want it to be completely straight-ahead or entirely Latin. The actual recording took place very quickly but I'd been planning this album for a long time. These are songs that I've written over the course of the last couple of years."

The accessible music of *Signature* does not need a complete play-by-play but a few highpoints should be mentioned: the uptempo and somewhat explosive modern jazz of "Cyclone" ("that one has a kind of crazy energy to it"), Fambrough's lightly funky "Angels At Play" which the bassist actually wrote while watching his daughters play, the Calypso feel of the memorable "St. Croix," Alston's soulful ballad "Jazz Eyes," the trio workout on "Alfalfa Sez" and the very lyrical "Sammy's

Song." Actually there are no throwaways on this well-paced set, which finds O'Connell tastefully utilizing electric keyboards for color while emerging as a pianist and composer to be reckoned with.

During the past year Bill O'Connell has primarily been working as a sideman with the groups of Charles Fambrough, Dave Valentin and Jon Lucien but, with the completion of *Signature*, it seems only a matter of time before he is thought of as an important bandleader himself. —Scott Yanow

Produced by Charles Fambrough

Recorded and mixed by Glen Barrett at Morningstar Studios, Springhouse, Pennsylvania January 6-15, 1993

Executive Producers: George Nayful and Jim Snowden

Special thanks to Jim Snowden and George Nayful and the staff at Mesa/Bluemoon, Bryan DiChristofano, Tony Delgado, Glen, Don and the staff at Morningstar Very special thanks to Grover Washington, Jr.

Tracks 3 and 6 published by Broski Music (BMS)

Track 7 published by Notala Music (NSMB) Tracks 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 10 published by O'Connell Music (OSAC)

Art Direction/Design: Michelle Lawrence

Front Cover Artwork: Darryl Daniels

Project Assistance: Howard Alston

Grover Washington Jr. appears courtesy of Columbia Records

Charles Fambrough appears courtesy of CTI Records

Bluemoon Recordings

presents, Signature, a

forum for showcasing

new or underexposed

jazz talent.

Pianist/composer

Bill O'Connell is

the first featured artist

on this collection of

outstanding jazz.

1. Main Street (Bill O'Connell) 4:53

GROVER WASHINGTON, JR. — soprano saxophone
BILL O'CONNELL — piano, keyboards
CHARLES FAMBROUGH — bass
PABLO BATISTA — congas, percussion
RICKY SEBASTIAN — drums

2. Tell Me Again (Bill O'Connell) 4:38

BILL O'CONNELL — piano, keyboards
CHARLES FAMBROUGH — acoustic bass
PABLO BATISTA — bongos
RICKY SEBASTIAN — drums

3. Nina (Charles Fambrough) 3:59

BILL O'CONNELL — piano, keyboards
CHARLES FAMBROUGH — acoustic bass
PABLO BATISTA — bongos, percussion
RICKY SEBASTIAN — drums
HOWARD ALSTON — soprano saxophone

4. St. Croix (Bill O'Connell) 5:34

BILL O'CONNELL — piano, keyboards
CHARLES FAMBROUGH — acoustic bass
PABLO BATISTA — congas, percussion
RICKY SEBASTIAN — drums

5. Alfata Sez (Bill O'Connell) 4:02

BILL O'CONNELL — piano, keyboards
CHARLES FAMBROUGH — acoustic bass
RICKY SEBASTIAN — drums

6. Angels at Play (Charles Fambrough) 5:33

GROVER WASHINGTON, JR. — soprano saxophone
BILL O'CONNELL — piano, keyboards
CHARLES FAMBROUGH — acoustic bass
PABLO BATISTA — congas, percussion
RICKY SEBASTIAN — drums

7. Jazz Eyes (Howard Alston) 3:40

BILL O'CONNELL — piano
CHARLES FAMBROUGH — acoustic bass
RICKY SEBASTIAN — drums
HOWARD ALSTON — soprano saxophone

8. Bill or Miss (Bill O'Connell) 4:41

BILL O'CONNELL — piano
CHARLES FAMBROUGH — acoustic bass
RICKY SEBASTIAN — drums

9. Cyclone (Bill O'Connell) 4:54

BILL O'CONNELL — piano, keyboards
PABLO BATISTA — congas, percussion
RICKY SEBASTIAN — drums

10. Sammy's Song (Bill O'Connell) 5:52

BILL O'CONNELL — piano
HOWARD ALSTON — soprano saxophone

PLEASE CALL 1.800.786.3722 FOR A FREE CATALOG.
© © 1993 Bluemoon Recordings, a Division of Mesa/
Bluemoon Recordings, Ltd. Marketed by Mesa/Bluemoon
Recordings, Ltd. Distributed in the USA by Rhino Records,
Inc., in Canada by BMG Music Canada, Inc. All rights
reserved. Unauthorized duplication is a violation of
applicable. (79176)

BLUEMOON

BLUEMOON

Signature

featuring Bill O'Connell

1. Main Street 4:53
2. Tell Me Again 4:38
3. Dina 3:59
4. St. Croix 5:34
5. Alfalfa Sez 4:02
6. Angels at Play 5:33
7. Jazz Eyes 3:40
8. Hit or Miss 4:41
9. Cyclone 4:54
10. Sammy's Song 5:52

R2 79176

PRODUCED BY CHARLES FAMBROUGH

Tracks 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 10 written by Bill O'Connell, O'Connell Music (SESAC);

Tracks 3 and 6 written by Charles Fambrough, Broski Music (BMI);

Track 7 written by Howard Alston, Notisla Music (ASCAP).

© 1993 Bluemoon Recordings

Bluemoon Recordings is a Division of Warner/Bluemoon Recordings, Ltd. Distributed in the USA by Blue Moon, Inc., in Canada by BMG Music Canada, Inc.